



Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE **107th** CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2002

Senate

Introduction of The Clean Air Planning Act

Mr. President –This past June, at an EPW Committee markup, I joined the majority of committee members in reporting out legislation to reduce harmful emissions from our nation's power plants. At that time, I offered, and then withdrew an alternate, comprehensive, 4-emission approach. Since then, along with representatives from electric generators who would be impacted by such legislation, and some leaders in the environmental community, I have worked to strengthen my amendment even further. The result is the Clean Air Planning Act. I rise today to introduce this bill, and am pleased to be joined by Senators Chafee, Breaux, and Baucus.

The bill takes a market-based approach that would aggressively reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and mercury from electrical power generators. This approach also would provide planning and regulatory certainty to electric generators, who are required to achieve these reductions. It is mindful of the fact that coal fuels approximately 50 percent of our nation's electricity and contributes a disproportionate share of emissions, and will remain the leading source of reliable, affordable electricity for decades to come.

The public health and environmental impacts of SO₂, NO_x and mercury have been well documented. While there is bipartisan agreement that emissions of these three pollutants from power plants need further control, there is some disagreement over

how much and how fast. The Clean Air Planning Act would establish significant caps on total emissions of these pollutants, but the caps would be phased in to provide the industry the time needed to meet the caps. In addition, the bill includes a flexible trading system to allow the caps to be attained most efficiently.

There is also a growing consensus that greenhouse gases such as CO₂ emissions from power plants are contributing to climate change. The time has come to set up mechanisms that will address these emissions without impeding economic growth. The Clean Air Planning Act establishes the modest goal of capping CO₂ emissions from electrical generators at 2001 levels by 2012. Generators can meet that goal with a flexible system that allows both trading between generators.

The bill also includes flexible options to reduce the costs of controlling carbon dioxide emissions through international projects and through forest and agricultural projects that can sequester carbon from the atmosphere while also providing additional environmental benefits. Part of the task ahead is to get better analysis that helps determine the right parameters for these flexibility provisions, so that the bill provides a smooth least-cost transition for the industry yet also delivers a meaningful incentive for improved efficiency and reduced emissions from power plants.

In the context of comprehensive legislation that will achieve significant reductions in emissions from power plants, some existing regulatory requirements should be updated. This bill carefully updates some New Source Review requirements to eliminate redundancy while retaining strict environmental protections.

I have heard from several experts in recent weeks who have studied provisions of this bill as it was being developed, and I plan to engage them in further discussions in the weeks and months ahead. I appreciate their willingness to help keep this important topic moving forward. This is a complex issue, one that should be of great importance to electric generators, environmental leaders, state and local regulators, and to each of us here in the Senate. There are numerous complicated issues in this legislation such as the proper extent of crediting off system carbon reductions, equitable allocation of allowances, appropriate regulatory streamlining, and prevention of local impacts, and we invite assistance from all who want to help us address these issues.

Today, America's power plants will emit over 6 million tons of harmful emissions. They will also power the world's most productive economy. Reducing emissions while retaining affordable electricity is the goal of the Clean Air Planning Act, and I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort. I look forward to developing consensus within the Senate next year and passing strong, comprehensive legislation.

Thank you Mr. President. I request that the text of this bill be printed in the Record.